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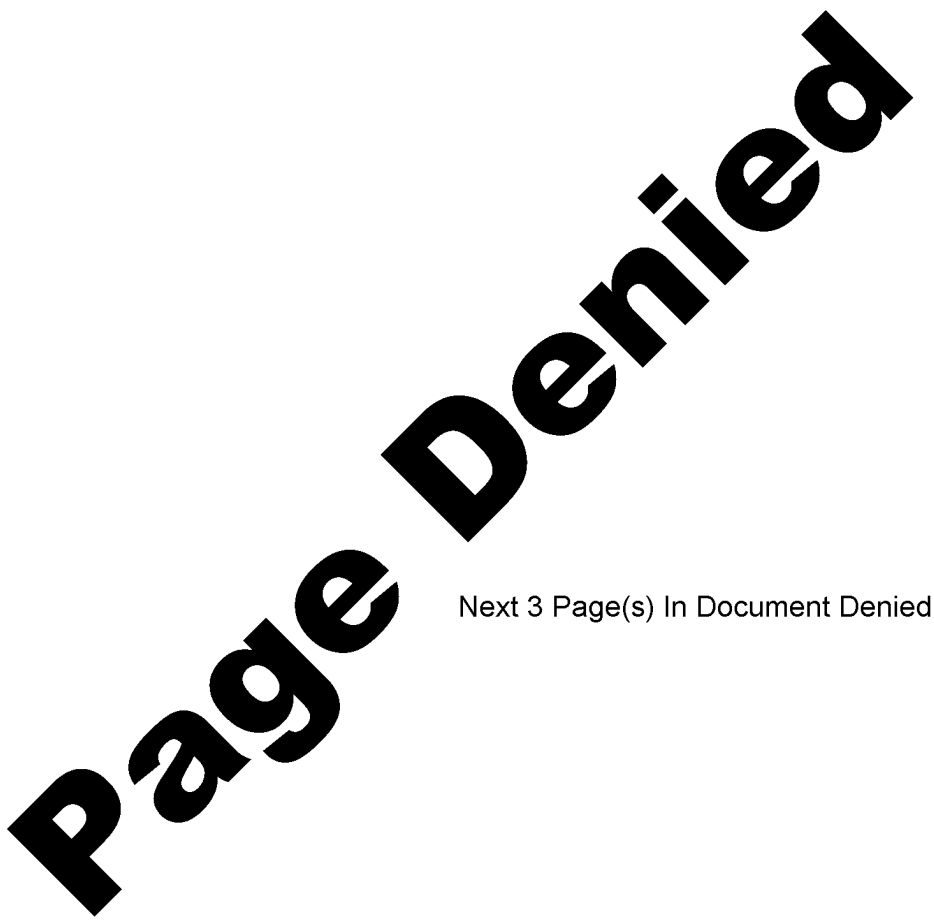

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The Problem of Coastal Antilanding Defense

by

Colonel A. Lukash

In the military press recently the problem of coastal antilanding defense is being discussed as a whole and its individual important questions as well. In this connection we would like to make a few observations regarding the article by General-Mayor of Tank Troops A. Zvartsev and Colonel N. Nemozhenko.*

First of all, we consider that the width of the zone of antilanding defense of an army corps or division will in each case depend on such factors as the importance and operational capacity of the axis being defended, the capability of our troops and the enemy's, and the presence of basic operational or strategic targets (naval and other bases, ports, dispersed basing points, etc.). Besides that, it is necessary to consider the preparation of the theater of military operations on a given coastal axis, the views and probable nature of enemy actions in amphibious landing operations, and also to keep in mind the limited number of forces which can be allocated for antilanding defense. Proceeding from this, and considering the experience of several exercises, it is possible to assume that in a typical case a division on an axis suitable for landing will defend several sectors suitable for landing in a zone up to 80 to 100 kilometers, and an army corps in a zone of 300 to 400 kilometers and more.

Coastal antilanding defense under modern conditions is, in our view, based on the destruction of enemy nuclear weapons which can be employed against defending troops. Combat with enemy landing forces is taken out to the maximum possible distance from the coast being defended. Forces and means carry out a broad maneuver in conjunction with firm holding of sectors and areas on the axes suitable for landing. Various obstacles in the water and on the shore are widely employed and engineer preparation of the terrain is also skilfully conducted. These principles are to be taken as basic in the examination of problems of antilanding defense.

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*Collection of Articles of the Journal "Military Thought", No. 3 (79), 1966.

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Besides the ground forces, designated groupings of forces and means of the navy and of front aviation can be allocated for coastal antilanding defense.

The composition and tasks of the first echelon of an army corps or a division will be determined by the concept of the operations of its own forces on the sea and shore. Depending on the concept, the first echelon must be of a strength to allow it to repel the landing of an enemy landing force on designated axes and sectors or inflict maximum losses on it; to hold important areas on the main landing axes and, relying on these areas, split up the landing force; and to support the delivery of nuclear and chemical strikes and the conduct of counterattacks against it. To this end, it is advisable to resubordinate the naval coastal artillery, if it is in the zone of the corps, to the commanders of the first-echelon divisions.

One of the conditions which ensures success of combat with the landing forces of an enemy, as his intentions are revealed and the effects of strikes against the landing forces at landing points and at sea by front and navy means are clarified, will be the comprehensive improvement of the antilanding defense. This is caused by the fact that on a number of coastal axes defense may be organized in a very short time frame, at times only during the course of passage of landing forces by sea under aggressive action of enemy missile/nuclear weapons and aviation. The basic measures in this period can be the following: the clarification of tasks, the procedure of cooperation and maneuver of the forces and means participating in repelling the landing of landing forces, increase of the density of fire means and obstacles, and the creation of new obstacle zones on threatened axes; improvement of positions, defense areas, and shelter in them; and plotting of secondary routes for maneuver of the troops. Besides a change in the locations of troops, control posts, and rear areas for the purposes of an anti-nuclear maneuver, there can arise a need to eliminate the aftereffects of enemy employment of weapons of mass destruction and to restore the combat effectiveness of troops.

In repelling the landing of enemy landing forces it is necessary to consider the sequence of their arrival in landing areas and the nature of actions in the last stage of the amphibious landing operation, as well as the capabilities of our own troops. So long as enemy carrier-based aviation is securing the approach and deployment of all elements of the landing forces with its aggressive actions from the sea, delivery of strikes against the carrier large unit takes on first importance. The delivery of these strikes should be organized by the naval commander, employing submarines and missile-carrying aviation for this. The air

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defense troops and fighter aviation, operating according to the plan of the front, will prevent the carrying out of aerial reconnaissance, turn back massed strikes of enemy aviation, and prevent the spotting of missile launches and shipboard artillery fire.

The sequence of actions of the antilanding defense forces and the allocation of targets for destruction can be approximately as follows. Operational-tactical missiles will first deliver a nuclear strike against the forward enemy landing detachments in a designated area. After them, supporting front aviation, submarines and naval aviation will deliver strikes against the same and other landing detachments. Then strikes against detachments of fire support ships, helicopter carriers, and surviving detachments of landing forces can be delivered by medium-range coastal missile units and strike groups of navy ships. Depending on the results of the first massed strike and given the conditions for the repeated use of forces, subsequent strikes can also be delivered against other areas of destruction closer to shore for the purpose of disrupting the planned approach of enemy landing forces to areas of deployment, maneuvering, and embarkation onto assault landing means.

At the same time, it is necessary to keep in mind that modern means of reconnaissance and launch control of operational-tactical and tactical missiles of the ground forces do not yet completely provide for their effective use against mobile and maneuvering sea targets at maximum ranges. It is advisable to equip missile units of the ground forces with radar sets which would provide for the launch of tactical missiles to a range of 60 to 70 kilometers from shore, and of operational-tactical missiles to 250 to 280 kilometers. This will allow forestalling enemy ships in deployment and destroying them before they employ missile/nuclear weapons. This will provide greater independence for the ground forces in coastal antilanding defense.

With the beginning of deployment of landing detachments at a distance of 20 to 40 kilometers from shore, all the main forces of the antilanding defense should deliver strikes against them. In so far as the first echelon of the landing force (at the strength of a division or army corps) along with supporting and covering forces represents a large number of widely dispersed important targets, it is difficult to divide these up in advance among the forces of various branch arms delivering strikes in a given area of destruction. It is most likely that missile units of the ground forces will deliver a strike against the landing detachments in areas of their deployment and embarkation onto assault landing means. Coastal missile units, missile ships, and missile and torpedo boats of the

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navy can at the same time deliver strikes against the fire support ships of the landing force, helicopter carriers, groups of minesweepers and obstacle-clearing ships, and against landing force detachments not being destroyed by the missile units of the ground forces. After this supporting aviation can destroy the surviving landing ships, transports, and helicopter carriers.

If, as a result of the above strikes or for other reasons, it has not been possible to break up the landing of the first echelon of the enemy landing force, then it is advisable to deliver nuclear strikes also against amphibious armored equipment and assault landing means following in waves toward landing points. All other fire means of antilanding defense, depending on the range of their fire, take part in repelling the landing. At the same time, the forces and means of the navy must carry on combat with the fire support ships of the landing force and destroy the other ships approaching the shore. Strike groups of surface vessels can deliver strikes against the flanks of the waves of amphibious armored equipment and other assault landing means.

Considering the contemporary capabilities for wide employment of helicopters, there is reason to assume that in the not too distant future the landing of the first echelon of an enemy landing division can be carried out mainly through the use of helicopters simultaneously with seaborne landing of amphibious tanks and other amphibious armored equipment. This will permit the enemy not only to increase the speed and depth of the landing but also to ensure tactical surprise, dispersal of forces during and after the landing, as well as landing in the most difficult sectors of the coast. In the views of the American command, airborne landings of different strengths and purposes can be employed to a depth of 50 to 200 kilometers from the shore immediately after the delivery of nuclear strikes.

All this provides a basis for considering that under modern conditions amphibious landing operations will become joint operations in which various forces can be landed from sea and air. Therefore, combat with airborne landing forces in coastal defense acquires the same, if not greater, importance as combat with amphibious landing forces.

Destruction of helicopter carriers and other ships must be at the center of attention for the entire duration of combat with landing forces. Helicopter-borne and airborne landing forces in flight to landing areas and during landing must be destroyed by air defense means, aviation, and other fire means. Explosive and non-explosive engineer obstacles will find wide

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application against them.

Airborne landing forces landed by the enemy prior to the amphibious landing or simultaneously with it at a considerable depth into the antilanding defense, and helicopter-borne landing forces in the coastal zone, are to be immediately blocked and destroyed before they join with the amphibious force. For this, nuclear and chemical warheads, air strikes, as well as counterattacks of specially designated units, various reserves and subunits from the rear garrisons, can be employed.

If, in spite of the efforts of the antilanding defense, the enemy still succeeds in landing a landing force, it is to be destroyed by nuclear weapons of low yield, chemical weapons, conventional fire means, air strikes, and counterattacks of subunits, units (especially tank units), and large units of the first echelon of the army corps before the landing force has consolidated itself on the captured beachheads.

On the whole, large units of the first echelon of the army corps must firmly hold occupied areas and positions in the depth of the coast and on the flanks of the landed landing force, and prevent its advance as well as the joining of the sea and air landing forces. This will establish conditions for delivering nuclear and chemical strikes against the enemy, and for developing and conducting counterattacks with the reserves of the army corps.

The principal efforts of the forces of the front in this period are concentrated on isolating the landing area of the landing force from the approach and landing of subsequent echelons and reserves of the enemy, and on destroying these echelons and missile and artillery support ships.

The counterattack of the corps reserve will be conducted on the most threatened axis, when the main forces of the first echelon of the amphibious landing force still have not completed their landing and are carrying on the fight for control of the beachhead to secure the landing and deployment of subsequent echelons, and when the second echelon is delayed, by nuclear strikes, air strikes and strikes of the ships of the navy at sea, on the approaches to the landing area of the first echelon.

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In conclusion, we note that under modern conditions antilanding defense on coastal axes embraces a broad range of questions requiring further research and testing in the course of operational and combat training of troops.

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